

Claims

- [c1] 1.A system for remotely accessing an internet connection having a dynamic IP address, the system comprising:
- an internet appliance coupled to an internet connection;
 - a dynamic IP relay hardware device coupled with said internet appliance and said internet connection;
 - said device being configured to report to a remote user, via said internet connection, a dynamic IP address associated with said internet connection; and,
 - said dynamic IP relay hardware is not a general purpose personal computer.
- [c2] 2.A system of claim 1 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware comprises a microprocessor and software executed by said microprocessor which, in combination, are configured to generate a report of an IP address for said internet connection in response to an occurrence of a predetermined event.
- [c3] 3.A system of claim 2 wherein said predetermined event comprises a passage of a predetermined amount of time.
- [c4] 4.A system of claim 2 wherein said predetermined event comprises a determination, at least in part, by monitoring software, that a dynamic IP address for said internet connection has been changed.
- [c5] 5.A system of claim 2 wherein said report is configurable in response to a particular configuration state of configuration software executed by said microprocessor.
- [c6] 6.A system of claim 5 wherein said configuration software is configured to provide for configuration thereof by a device external to said dynamic IP relay hardware device.
- [c7] 7.A system of claim 2 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware device comprises a printed circuit board disposed in a case housing other electronic hardware coupled to a computer network.
- [c8] 8.A system of claim 2 wherein said microprocessor assists in initiating a dial-up internet connection in response to an incoming telephone call.

- [c9] 9.A system of claim 8 wherein a security procedure is completed prior to initiating said dial-up internet connection.
- [c10] 10.A system of claim 9 wherein said security procedure comprises matching incoming information with predetermined information.
- [c11] 11.A system of claim 10 wherein said incoming information comprises a series of DTMF tones.
- [c12] 12.A system of claim 10 wherein said incoming information comprises caller ID information.
- [c13] 13.A system of claim 12 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware device comprises a stand-alone device which is not completely housed within a case containing a modem.
- [c14] 14.A system of claim 12 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware device comprises a stand-alone device which is not completely housed within a case containing a router.
- [c15] 15.A method of remotely accessing an internet appliance comprising the steps of:
providing an electronic hardware device which is not a general purpose personal computer;
using said electronic hardware device to generate a report of an IP address for an internet connection, in response to an occurrence of a predetermined event;
using said electronic hardware device to communicate said report to a remote user via said internet connection; and
using said IP address to remotely access said internet connection.
- [c16] 16.A method of claim 15 further comprising the step of:
determining if a change in IP address has occurred with respect to said internet connection.
- [c17] 17.A method of claim 15 wherein said report comprises an e-mail.
- [c18] 18.A method of claim 17 further comprising the steps of:

answering an incoming telephone call;
receiving incoming authorization information during said incoming telephone call;
matching said incoming authorization information to predetermined authorization information;
initiating a dial-up connection in response to said step of matching said incoming authorization information to predetermined authorization information; and
wherein said dial-up connection comprises said internet connection.

[c19] 19.A method of claim 18 further comprising the steps of:
configuring said report via a personal computer coupled to said electronic hardware device.

[c20] 20.A system for accessing information from an unattended internet appliance via an internet connection having dynamic IP addresses comprising:
an unattended internet appliance;
a telephone modem disposed between and interconnecting said unattended internet appliance with a remote user via a dial-up internet connection;
a stand-alone electronic hardware device which is not a general purpose personal computer and which is further not disposed in a case with a device which is configured for communicating information across a computer network;
said stand-alone electronic hardware device comprising a microprocessor and memory which is configured to store software therein which is executed by said microprocessor;
said stand-alone electronic hardware device being configured to receive report configuration commands from an external personal computer;
said microprocessor and said software together configured to initiate said dial-up internet connection in response to an incoming telephone call which authorizes said dial-up internet connection only after incoming information is matched to predetermined authorization information; and,
said microprocessor and said software together further configured to generate an e-mail report indicating a current IP address for said dial-up internet connection, where said e-mail report is in response to said report configuration

commands.

- [c21] 21. A method of testing a configuration of an internet appliance comprising the steps of:
- providing an electronic hardware device which is not a general purpose personal computer;
 - using said electronic hardware device to generate a report of an IP address for an internet connection, in response to an occurrence of a predetermined event;
 - using said electronic hardware device to communicate said report to a remote user via said internet connection; and
 - using said IP address to test a configuration.
- [c22] 22. A system for remotely accessing an internet connection having a dynamic IP address, the system comprising:
- a dynamic IP relay hardware device coupled to said internet connection;
 - a device being configured to report to a remote user, via said internet connection, a dynamic IP address associated with said internet connection; and,
 - said dynamic IP relay hardware is not a general purpose personal computer.
- [c23] 23. A system of claim 22 wherein said dynamic IP relay hardware comprises a microprocessor and software executed by said microprocessor which, in combination, are configured to generate a report of an IP address for said internet connection in response to an occurrence of a predetermined event.